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Faysal Prodhan, PCA
Norwich
District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Faysal Prodhan and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living in Norwich. I come before you today to ask that you invest the funding required to pay PCAs a livable wage and provide us quality benefits, including health insurance, paid time off and retirement.

While I have only been officially working as a PCA for a little over a year, I have provided this type of care for my father for over ten years. Caring for my father is something I am honored to do. I love helping him to be more active and to live a more fulfilled life. While it is nice to be paid to care for him, I would do it either way because it is my responsibility. My sister is a PCA as well, it is in my family's culture to care for one another.

However, just because we love our father and love caring for him does not mean that it does not come with its challenges. I had to quit my job in order to care for my father and so now my primary source of income is through my work as a PCA. In our last contract we won \$18.25 per hour in pay, but that has been negated by inflation and we are back to where we started. I would maybe get a second job but I also am going to school because I need to make more money than what I make as a PCA. I'm now starting a family of my own and I must find a career that will allow me to afford this. Working as a PCA opened my eyes to the struggles of living in poverty, living one event away from a crisis.

Let me give you an example of how unstable life can be as a PCA. My father got sick with Covid in 2021 and I could not work. The following Monday I got sick too. I went to the Connecticut Department of Labor to file for unemployment but they made it difficult. They gave me \$107.00 for the week. I was making \$500.00 a week as a PCA. Your employment is tied to your consumer and without livable wages, paid time off, and other benefits you become very vulnerable. You begin to feel as though one accident or negative life event is all it will take to send me spiraling into a financial crisis. This is unacceptable for any worker let alone a professional caregiver such as a PCA.

We need to do better as a state and that is why I have come before you today. Please properly fund home care services, so PCAs can earn livable wages and receive the benefits we deserve.

Thank you for your time.